

Message Text

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ORIGIN EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 SSO-00 INR-10 INRE-00 SS-15 CCO-00

RSC-01 /041 R

DRAFTED BY EA/LC:LMRIVES:CEJ

8/8/73 X-23132

APPROVED BY EA:AHUMMEL

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 156213

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS:PFOR, PGOV, CB

SUBJECT:TRANSMITTAL OF PROPOSED CAMBODIAN OPEN LETTER

1. AMBASSADOR UM SIM HAS GIVEN DEPARTMENT DRAFT TEXT OF AN OPEN LETTER HE PROPOSES PUBLICATION IN KEY US NEWSPAPERS NEXT WEEK, IF GKR APPROVES. FOR REASONS OF SPEED AND SECURITY HE HAS REQUESTED THAT THIS BE TRANSMITTED VIA US FACILITIES AND WOULD APPRECIATE EMBASSY PHNOM PENH TRANSMITTING TEXT TO GKR.

2. WE WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR CARRYING OUT UM SIM'S REQUEST AND GETTING REPLY ASAP. WHILE WE DO NOT BELIEVE AN OPEN LETTER WILL HAVE A TREMENDOUS EFFECT, WE BELIEVE IT WILL DO SOME GOOD AND IS A DEMONSTRATION OF CONTINUED EFFORTS BY UM SIM TO KEEP CAMBODIAN ISSUE IN FAVORABLE LIGHT HERE. TEXT FOLLOWS: BEGIN QTE: AN OPEN LETTER TO THE CONGRESS AND THE AMERICAN PEOPLE FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF THE KHMER REPUBLIC - CONGRESS HAS EXPRESSED ITS WILL THAT AMERICAN TACTICAL AIR SUPPORT FOR OUR COUNTRY SHOULD CEASE TODAY. PRESIDENT NIXON HAS COMPLIED WITH THE EXPRESSION OF THAT WILL, AND ISSUED ORDERS FOR AMERICAN MILITARY OPERATIONS THERE TO CEASE.

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CAMBODIA HAS ALWAYS WISHED TO LIVE AT PEACE WITH ALL

NATIONS. UNTIL THREE YEARS AGO WE HAD AN ARMY OF ONLY SOME 30,000 MEN, POORLY EQUIPPED AND USED LARGELY FOR CEREMONIAL PURPOSES. FOR THIS REASON WE COULD DO LITTLE TO PREVENT THE WELL-TRAINED NORTH VIETNAMESE ARMY AND THE VIETCONG GUERRILLA FORCES FROM USING OUR TERRITORY FOR THEIR ASSAULTS UPON SOUTH VIETNAM, ALTHOUGH WE WISHED TO BE NEUTRAL. IN 1970, AFTER PRINCE SIHANOUK WAS LEGALLY DEPOSED WE MIGHT STILL HAVE ACQUIESCED IN COMMUNIST WISHES AND ALLOWED LARGE PORTIONS OF CAMBODIA TO BE USED ONCE AGAIN AS A STAGING GROUND FOR AGGRESSION AGAINST SOUTH VIETNAM.

CAMBODIA DID NOT DO THIS. INSTEAD, IT CHOSE TO STAND WITH THE UNITED STATES AND DEFEND ITS OWN FREEDOM AND INDEPENDENCE, AGAINST GREAT ODDS. WE THUS HELPED LESSEN THE BURDEN ON AMERICAN AND SOUTH VIETNAMESE TROOPS IN SOUTH VIETNAM, AND ENGAGED LARGE NUMBERS OF NORTH VIETNAMESE TROOPS WHO MIGHT OTHERWISE HAVE CAUSED HIGHER AMERICAN CASUALTIES. WE BELIEVED THAT THE UNITED STATES WOULD RECOGNIZE ITS MORAL OBLIGATION TO US FOR HAVING CAST OUT LOT WITH YOU, EVEN THOUGH YOU HAVE NO FORMAL TREATY COMMITMENT TO US. WE BELIEVED THAT, AS PRESIDENT KENNEDY SAID IN HIS INAUGURAL ADDRESS OF 1961, THE UNITED STATES WOULD "BEAR ANY BURDEN" TO HELP US IN THE DEFENSE OF OUR LIBERTIES. WE BELIEVED WE COULD COUNT UPON THE UNITED STATES.

NOW THE UNITED STATES HAS TAKEN ITS MOST DIRECT AND EFFECTIVE SUPPORT FROM US. WE ARE CONFIDENT THAT OUR PEOPLE WILL CONTINUE TO FIGHT FOR OUR NATION'S INDEPENDENCE. THE AMERICAN CONGRESS AND PEOPLE SHOULD REMEMBER THAT IT REQUIRED MANY YEARS TO PROPERLY TRAIN AND EQUIP THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE TO FIGHT FOR THEIR INDEPENDENCE. THE PEOPLE OF CAMBODIA NOW STRUGGLING FOR THEIR SURVIVAL, ASK ONLY FOR MORE TIME SO THAT THEY TOO CAN ONE DAY STAND ON THEIR OWN. WE DO, INDEED, APPRECIATE THE HELP ALREADY GIVEN BUT WE MUST HAVE CONTINUED MILITARY, ECONOMIC POLITICAL AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE FROM THE UNITED STATES IF WE ARE TO PREVAIL. IF CAMBODIA IS CONQUERED, ITS FALL WILL HAVE FAR-RANGING REPERCU-SIONS FOR SOUTH-CONFIDENTIAL

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EAST ASIA, AMERICA, AND THE ENTIRE WORLD.

WE ASK, THEN, FOR ONGOING ASSISTANCE FROM YOU, THE CONGRESS AND PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES. FOR IF THE UNITED STATES GROWS WEARY OF AIDING ITS FRIENDS AND ABANDONS THEM, EVEN THOUGH THEY ARE WILLING TO FIGHT AND TO CONTINUE FIGHTING AS LONG AS HUMANLY POSSIBLE IN THE DEFENSE OF THEIR FREEDOM AND THE FREEDOM IN THE WORLD, YOUR GREAT

COUNTRY WILL SOMEDAY FIND ITSELF ALONE. END TEXT. ROGERS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 08 AUG 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: elyme
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973STATE156213
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: LMRIVES:CEJ
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS HUMMEL
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730850/aaaabktd.tel
Line Count: 116
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ORIGIN EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: elyme
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21 NOV 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <21-Nov-2001 by shawdg>; APPROVED <03-Jan-2002 by elyme>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: RANSMITTAL OF PROPOSED CAMBODIAN OPEN LETTER
TAGS: PFOR, PGOV, CB
To: PHNOM PENH
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005